



ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXTENDED BENEFIT PROGRAM AND EXTENDED BENEFITS PROGRAM RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Notice of Potential Eligibility for Extended Benefits

Our records indicate you have exhausted all of the compensation due on your unemployment insurance claim. The State of Louisiana entered an extended benefit period effective October 30, 2005. As a result, you may be entitled to extended unemployment compensation. If you are partially or totally unemployed, contact your local Job Center office to file a claim. Please observe the following schedule for filing your claim.

Date

Time

Location.

Extended Benefits Program Rights and Responsibilities

The Extended Benefits (EB) program was established to pay benefits during periods of high unemployment to workers, including Federal civilian employees and ex-military personnel, who exhausted their basic entitlement to regular state and federal unemployment benefits. The State of Louisiana and the federal government share in the cost of the benefits paid under the EB program.

Some Questions and Answers About the Louisiana Extended Benefits Program

1. Who is entitled to Extended Benefits?

You may be entitled to EB if you:

- Are unemployed.
- Have established eligibility for state or federal unemployment compensation and have exhausted those benefits.
- Do not have available regular benefits under the unemployment compensation laws of any state, the Virgin Islands, Canada or the United States.
- Meet the eligibility requirements of the law and are not disqualified.
- Have a state benefit year that ends within an Extended Benefit period.

Not everyone is entitled to Extended Benefits. For example, an individual whose benefit year ended before the beginning of an Extended Benefit period will not be eligible for Extended Benefits.

In addition, an individual who was disqualified on their regular unemployment claim and has not met the requirements to remove that disqualification will not be eligible for Extended Benefits.

2. What does it mean to have “exhausted” my benefits?

For purposes of the Louisiana EB program, you have exhausted your rights to regular unemployment compensation when:

- You have received all the benefits to which you were entitled in a benefit year under a state or federal program; **OR**
- Your benefit year has expired before you have drawn all your benefits and no new benefit year can be established.

3. What is an Extended Benefit period?

You can only be paid EB for weeks of unemployment during an EB period. The U.S. Department of Labor determines the EB period for a state based on unemployment data from the state. The EB period can be triggered “on” when Louisiana’s Insured Unemployment Rate (IUR) for a 13-week period averages at least 5% and is 120% higher than the average IUR for the same period in the preceding two years.

4. How much will I receive under this program and for how long?

The EB Program allows you to receive extended benefits for up to 13 weeks, after you have exhausted your claim for regular UI benefits. The maximum amount of extended benefits to which you are entitled will be the *lesser* of the following:

- 50 percent of the regular benefits monetary entitlement
- 13 times the regular claim Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA)
- 39 times the Weekly Benefit Amount minus the regular benefits paid or considered paid

The weekly amount of compensation will be the **same** as your regular unemployment claim.

Note: Individuals living in a state not in an EB period will be eligible for no more than two weeks of Extended Benefits.

5. What other requirements must I meet to be eligible for Extended Benefits?

Your eligibility for EB will be determined in the same manner as were your rights to regular state or federal benefits. You must be unemployed, and be able to work and available for work. You must complete the weekly pay orders and submit as instructed. You must be diligently seeking work during each week for which you are claiming EB.

Special Extended Benefits Work Search Requirements

You must make a systematic and sustained effort to obtain work each week. You must contact at least 3 employers per week, and you must keep a dated record of these work search contacts that includes the name, address and telephone number of the employer and the person contacted

The law provides that after filing your claim for EB, **you must apply for and accept any suitable work**. Under the requirements of federal law relating to the EB Program, **suitable work is any work you are capable of doing**. If you refuse any job within your capability, you will be disqualified if:

- The gross weekly pay offered is more than your EB weekly benefit
- The offered pay is at least the federal minimum wage (\$5.15 per hour); **And**
- The offer is either in writing or the job is listed by the employer with a local Job Service Office

6. Under what circumstances will I be disqualified for Extended Benefits?

You are subject to the same disqualifications under the EB program as under Louisiana's regular benefits program. In addition, the law provides that you must be disqualified from EB if you do not meet the systematic and sustained work search requirements or if you fail to apply for, or accept suitable work. If you are disqualified, the only way you can again become entitled to EB is to return to work and work for at least 4 weeks (whether or not consecutive) and earn at least 4 times your EB weekly benefit amount. If you did not seek work during a week, and do not elect to file for the week, a disqualification for benefits under the EB provisions of law, will not be assessed your claim for benefits.

7. When will Extended Benefits start?

Payments may be made only during an EB period and can be made for any weeks that begin prior to the ending date of an EB period. The law permitting EB payments in Louisiana was effective with the week beginning 10/30/05.

8. When will an Extended Benefit period end?

The EB period will end whenever the state Insured Unemployment Rate drops below the EB trigger levels (see Item 3). However, once an EB period begins, it will continue for at least 13 consecutive weeks.

9. What will happen to my Extended Benefits if new regular state or federal benefit rights become available to me?

Any time you become eligible for regular state or federal benefits you must file a new claim for regular benefits and your eligibility for EB will end. If an EB period is in effect and if you exhaust regular benefits on a new claim, you may again qualify for EB based on wages earned on your new claim.

10. How does Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) affect Extended Benefits?

You must exhaust all EB benefit entitlement before you may be eligible for DUA. Extended Benefits are not payable on DUA claims.

11. How do I apply for Extended Benefits?

You must report to your nearest local unemployment office or, if you reside in another state, contact the nearest telephone call center.

12. How do I make a weekly claim for Extended Benefits?

You must claim EB on a weekly basis. However, EB can only be claimed over the Internet at www.LAWORKS.net. If you do not have Internet access, you may report to your nearest Job Center to file for weekly benefits.

You must use your Easy Call password to access the Internet EB Weekly Claim System. If you have lost or forgotten your Easy Call password, report to your local Job Center or, if you live in another state, call the Interstate Liable Unit for assistance.

Once you have accessed the Internet EB Weekly Claim System, you will be asked the same five questions you were asked on the Easy Call System regarding your eligibility for benefits.

In addition to answering these questions you will be required to enter the number of job search contacts you completed during the week. Remember the EB program requires a minimum of three contacts each week. You will be required to enter the date of contact, the employer's name, name of person contacted, method of contact, telephone number, and outcome of the contact. Failure to provide this information could result in loss of benefits.

13. How will I be paid for Extended Benefits?

All payments of EB benefits will be made through the use of Debit Cards or Direct Deposit. Shortly after you file your claim, you will receive a debit card in the mail. It will have instructions on how to activate the card. Once you have been found eligible for benefits, the card will be populated each week with the benefit amount to which you are entitled. It may be 3 or 4 days after you file your weekly claim before the benefits are available through the debit card. You may inquire about the balance on the card, without charge, by contacting the customer service center listed on the card. If you have problems with the debit card, contact Chase Bank at 1-866-795-5926.

If you wish to have your benefits paid through Direct Deposit, you can access a Direct Deposit Form on the website www.LAWORKS.net or contact your local Job Center. Until the direct deposit is implemented, your benefits will be paid through the debit card. Check your balance each week to determine when your benefits have been paid through direct deposit.

14. Will I have the right of appeal under the Extended Benefit program?

Yes. You have the same appeal rights under the EB program as under the regular benefits program.

15. Does the law provide any penalties?

Yes, if you intentionally make a false statement or misrepresentation or conceal material information to obtain benefits, you will be required to make restitution and may be subject to a fine and/or imprisonment, and/or community service. If, by mistake, you gave incorrect information when you filed your claim, you may avoid penalties by notifying us as soon as you realize the mistake.